

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A print-on-demand method for creating and reproducing books by hetero-  
5 geneous systems, said method comprising the steps of:
  - a) receiving as book files, a digital representation of a book targeted for reproduction;
  - b) converting said book files including book production information and book  
identification information into a common normal format (CNF) files that are solution-  
10 independent;
  - c) storing the CNF files as a mastered book;
  - d) converting the CNF files into equipment specific format files that match the  
needs of a book reproduction system; and
  - e) reproducing said book from information comprised by said equipment specific  
15 format files.
2. The method in Claim 1, wherein said book in step a) is originally in the  
form of electronic files.
3. The method in Claim 1, wherein said book in step a) is originally in the  
form of a hard copy, and step a) further comprises the steps of:  
20 scanning the components of said book; and  
converting scanned components of said book into said digital representation.

4. The method in Claim 1, wherein said book identification information comprises the book title.

5. The method in Claim 1, wherein said book identification information comprises the book author.

5 6. The method in Claim 1, wherein said book identification information comprises the book publisher.

7. The method in Claim 1, wherein said book identification information comprises the International Standard Book Number.

8. The method in Claim 1, wherein said book identification information  
10 comprises the book publishing date.

9. The method in Claim 1, wherein step d) comprises the step of:  
acquiring or generating hard copy book production information.

10. The method in Claim 9, wherein said book production information comprises printing information.

11. The method in Claim 9, wherein said book production information comprises binding information.  
15

12. The method in Claim 1, wherein step d) further comprises the step of:  
via a Raster Image Processor, creating a bitmap of the book block.

13. The method in Claim 1, wherein step d) further comprises the step of:  
via a Raster Image Processor, creating a bitmap of the book cover.  
20

14. The method in Claim 1, wherein step d) further comprises the step of:  
acquiring or generating hard copy book production information.

15. The method in Claim 1, wherein for electronic books, said book production information comprises security information.

16. The method in Claim 1, wherein for electronic books, said book production information comprises viewing capabilities.

5 17. The method in Claim 1, wherein for electronic books, said book production information comprises printing capabilities.

18. The method in Claim 1 wherein step e) comprises for electronic books, the step of:

providing access to said book via an electronic link to a data network.

10 19. The method in Claim 1 wherein step e) comprises for electronic books, the step of:

delivering said book to a predefined destination.

20. A print-on-demand system for creating and reproducing books by heterogeneous reproduction workflows, said system comprising:

15 a book file generator adapted to generate a digital representation of a book targeted for reproduction into book files;

a common normal format converter adapted to convert said book files and book identification information into a common normal format that is solution-independent;

a book file memory adapted to store common normal format files as a mastered  
20 book;

an equipment specific format file converter adapted to convert common normal format files into a equipment specific format matching the needs of a book reproduction equipment being utilized to reproduce the book; and

a book reproducer adapted to reproduce the book from information comprised by  
5 the equipment specific format files.

21. The system in Claim 20, wherein said book in step a) is originally in the form of electronic files.

22. The system in Claim 20, wherein said book in step a) is originally in the form of a hard copy, and said book file generator further comprises:

10 a book scanner adapted to scan the components of said book; and

a scanned component converter adapted to convert scanned components of said book into said digital representation.

23. The system in Claim 20, wherein said book identification information comprises the book title.

15 24. The system in Claim 20, wherein said book identification information comprises the book author.

25. The system in Claim 20, wherein said book identification information comprises the book publisher.

26. The method in Claim 20, wherein said book identification information  
20 comprises the International Standard Book Number.

27. The system in Claim 20, wherein said book identification information comprises the book publishing date.

28. The system in Claim 20, wherein said equipment specific format converter comprises:

a book production information generator adapted to generate hard copy book production information.

5 29. The system in Claim 28, wherein said book production information comprises printing equipment information.

30. The system in Claim 28, wherein said book production information comprises binding equipment information.

31. The system in Claim 20, wherein said equipment specific format converter  
10 comprises:

a Raster Image Processor adapted to create a bitmap of the book block.

32. The system in Claim 20, wherein step d) further comprises the step of:

a Raster Image Processor adapted to create a bitmap of the book cover.

33. The system in Claim 20, wherein said equipment specific format converter  
15 comprises:

a book production information generator adapted to generate hard copy book production information.

34. The system in Claim 20, wherein for electronic books, said book production information comprises security information.

20 35. The system in Claim 20, wherein for electronic books, said book production information comprises viewing capabilities.

36. The system in Claim 20, wherein for electronic books, said book production information comprises printing capabilities.

37. The system in Claim 20 wherein said book reproducer comprises for electronic books:

5 an electronic link adapted to provide access to said book.

38. The system in Claim 20 wherein said book reproducer comprises for electronic books:

an electronic link adapted to deliver said book to a predefined destination over a data network.